Met Office

April 2001

The averaging period used for the following assessment was 1961-1990.

UK overview

Changeable and wet overall. Average temperatures were close to normal, being warmest at the start of the month. Cold northerly winds prevailed mid month with some wintry showers and overnight frosts. Thundery showers towards the end with some sunny periods.

Although wet in most places, the Hebrides and Western Highlands recorded only half their long term average. Tiree had its driest March since 1969.

England and Wales diary of highlights

Changeable and very wet overall. A wet start with some thundery rain at times, followed by a short dry sunny spell. A cold third week with northerly winds and wintry showers. Frequent outbreaks of rain, thundery showers and hail featured for the remainder of the month.

1st to 10th This was a wet unsettled period as a series of depressions passed to the north of Scotland or traversed eastwards across northern England. Although warm or very warm and dry at first (London reached 21.5 °C on the 2nd), periods of rain and showers, some thundery and heavy affected many places soon after. Capel Curig/Gwynedd recorded a gust of 57 kn on the 5th. Some places in North Wales received from two to three inches of rain during the 5th and 6th. It became chilly later with some overnight frost in the north. There was some hill and coastal fog in the west at first on the 9th.

11th to 13th It was mainly dry and sunny but rather cold under transient high pressure, allowing some overnight frost. Patchy rain and drizzle affected Wales and south-west England during the 12th and 13th.

14th to 20th Cold northerly or north-westerly winds prevailed as pressure rose to the west and depressions tracked southeast from the Iceland area to Denmark. There were showers, some thundery, from time to time, these showers became distinctly wintry during the 18th to the 20th with hail, sleet, and snow mixed in. North Wales and counties adjacent to the North Sea were especially affected. There was widespread overnight frost, Sennybridge in Powys fell to -4.4 °C early on the 19th.

21st to 28th Rather cold, wet and unsettled as a complex area of low pressure encroached upon and established itself over the region from the North Atlantic. Bands of rain and showers often heavy with thunder and hail mixed in, were the prevailing feature of the weather, however most places had some sunny periods. The 22nd was very cold and wet as fronts became slow moving over western areas, Cynwyd in Denbighshire only just rose above 4 °C. Bristol reported a heavy thunderstorm on the 24th and there was some damaging hail in Norfolk on the 25th. A funnel cloud was observed off the Norfolk coast on the 26th. The remaining days to the 28th saw more thundery showers in many areas.

29th to 30th A drier finish to the month as rain and some scattered thundery showers over southern England slowly petered out. There were good sunny spells in remaining areas of England and Wales.

Scotland diary of highlights

Quiet month with few extremes.

April was a fairly quiet month, with a period of northerly winds being sandwiched between unsettled spells with slack low pressure systems. Most of the month was spent in polar air, with the snow on the hills retreating only slowly up the slopes. Despite the predominance of air of northerly origin, temperatures for the month were close to average.

The warmest days were experienced at the beginning of April as southerly winds advanced across the country. It was fairly cloudy in the south, but sun in the north enabled the temperature to reach 16.5 °C at Kinloss on the 2nd.

The mild southerly was soon followed by a cool westerly with sunny periods and showers for a couple of days. More unsettled weather followed for a week as two depressions passed close to the country, bringing a mixture of rain and showers.

High pressure built across Scotland in the wake of the lows, with many southern and western parts enjoying a brilliant day on the 11th. The high pressure stayed for a few days, but slow moving fronts gave rather cloudy weather in the southwest. Cold air persisted in the north and east, with temperatures falling to -4 °C at Lybster and Altnaharra on the 12th and 13th respectively.

The anticyclone was pushed westwards by a strong surge of northerly winds from the 15th to the 20th. There was much sunshine in the south-west but more in the way of cloud and wintry showers in the north and east. The temperature rose to only 1.9 °C at Corgarff on the 18th and fell to -5.7 °C at Loch Glascarnoch on the 20th.

More unsettled weather returned from the 21st to the 26th as slack low pressure areas and slow moving fronts brought areas of cloud and slight rain, mostly to the south. Shallow low pressure continued to dominate the weather until the end of the month, but the fronts cleared away to give most places bright and showery weather.

Northern Ireland diary of highlights

This was another very disappointing April month. Four of the five previous April months have been very wet across Northern Ireland. April 1997 was actually quite dry but it was also very dull. April 2001 has been quite wet across most areas, with only some central lowland areas recording slightly below average rainfall. The south-west was wettest, where rainfall totals locally exceeded 100 mm, or almost 175 % of average. It was a persistently cool month, with the month's highest temperature of only 15 °C recorded on the 2nd, otherwise temperatures struggled to reach 13 °C.

1st to 4th Largely dry and sunny, but rather cloudy on 1st, and with scattered showers on 3rd/4th.

5th to 9th Cloudy and quite wet, particularly on 5th and 6th. Mostly dry on 7th, but rain or showers on 8th and 9th.

10th to 11th Largely dry and bright or sunny.

12th to 20th Largely dry, although some heavy rain in far west on 14th. Some quite sunny days, especially on 15th, 16th, 19th and 20th, but also quite cold with wintry showers during Easter week and with widespread overnight frosts.

21st to 24th Generally dull and wet, particularly on 21st, but dry and very sunny on 23rd.

25th to 30th Cloudy but largely dry on 25th and 26th. Heavy showers on 27th and 28th, but showers becoming more scattered to allow more prolonged sunshine on 29th and 30th.

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